THE DUE ACCOUNT, AND Humble Petition OF THE Miniſters of the Goſpel, Lately Commiſsioned FOR THE Review and Alteration OF THE LITURGY TO HIS MAJESTY.

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TO THE KINGS Most Excellent MAJESTY.

May it please Your Majesty,

WHen the distempered Nation wearied with its own Contentions and Divisions, did groan for Unity and Peace, and wonderful Providence of the most Righteous God appearing for the removal of Impediments; their eyes were upon your Majesty, as the person born to be under God the Center of their Concord, and taught by Affliction to break the bonds of the Afflicted, and by experience of the sad effects of mens uncharitableness, and passions, to restrain all from violence and extremity, and kept up moderation and mediocrity, the Oil of Charity and Peace, and when your subjects desires were accomplished in your Majesties peaceable possession of the Throne, it was the joy and encouragement of the Sober and Religious, that you began the exercise of your Government, with a Proclamation full of Christian Zeal against Debauchery and Prophaneness, declaring also your dislike of those who under pretence of Affection to your Majesty, and your Service, assume to themselves the liberty of reviling, threat-

ming, and reproaching others, to prevent the Reconciliation and Union of hearts and affections, which can only (with Gods bleſſing) make us rejoyce in each other] Our comforts alſo were carried on by your Majeſties early, and ready entertainment of Motions for accommodation in thoſe points of Diſcipline and Worſhip, in which wee diſagreed, and your profeſſed Reſolutions to draw us together by mutual approaches, and publiſhing your healing Declaration, which was received with thanks of your Houſe of Commons, and the applauſe of the people, and the ſpecial joy of thoſe that longed for Concord and Tranquillity in the Church; in which your Majeſty declared ſo much ſatisfaction in the foundations of Agreement already laid for that you [ſhould think your ſelf very unfortunate, and ſuſpect ſthat you are defective in the Adminiſtration of Government; If any ſuperſtructures ſhould ſlack thoſe foundations, and contract or leſſen the bleſſed gift of Charity, which is a vital part of Chriſtian Religion.

And as in the ſaid gracious Declaration your Majeſty reſolved to [appoint an equal number of Learned Divines of both Perſwaſions, to review the Liturgy, and make ſuch Alterations as ſhall be thought moſt neceſſary, and ſome Additional Forms of Scripture phraſe, as neer as may be, ſuited unto the nature of ſeveral parts of Worſhip, and that it be left to the Miniſters choice to uſe one, or other, at his diſcretion, ſo in accompliſhment thereof your Majeſty among others, directed your Commiſſion to bee for the review of [the ſeveral Directions, Rules, and Forms of Prayer, and things in the ſaid Book of Common-Prayer contained] And if occaſion be to make ſuch ſeaſonable and neceſſary Alterations, Corrections, and Amendments thereof, as by and between us ſhall bee agreed upon to bee needful, or expedient for the giving a ſatisfaction to tender conſciences, and reſtoring and continuance of Peace and Unity in the Church under your Protection and Government; and what wee agree upon as needful or expedient to be done for the Altering, Diminiſhing, or Enlarging the ſaid Book of Common-Prayer, forthwith to certifie and preſent it in writing to your Majeſty.

In obedience to this your Majeſties Commiſſion, wee did with

with the Right Reverend Biſhops, who required of us that before any perſonal debate, wee ſhould bring in writing all our Exceptions againſt the Book of Common-Prayer, and all the Additional Forms which wee deſired; Both which wee performed, and received from them an Anſwer to the firſt, and returned them our full Reply; The laſt week of our time being deſigned to perſonal conference, was at the will of the Right Reverend Biſhops ſpent in a particular diſpute with three of each part, about the ſinfulneſs of one of the Injunctions, from which wee deſired to bee free, and in ſome other Conference on the Bye. And though the Account which wee are forced to give to your Majeſty of the iſſue of our Conſultations, is, that no Agreements are ſubſcribed by us to bee offered to your Majeſty according to your expectation; and though it bee none of our intent to caſt the leaſt unmeet reflection upon the Right Reverend Biſhops, and Learned Brethren, who think not meet to yeeld to any conſiderable Alterations, to the ends expreſſed in your Majeſties Commiſſion, yet wee muſt ſay, that it is ſome quiet to our minds, that we have not been guilty of your Majeſties, and your Subjects diſappointments, and that wee account not your Majeſties Gracious Commiſſion, and our labour loſt, having peace of conſcience in the diſcharge of our duty to God and you, that wee have been the ſeekers and followers of Peace, and have earneſtly Pleaded, and humbly Petitioned for it. And wee humbly beſeech your Majeſty, to beleeve that wee own no Principles of Faction or Diſobedience, nor Patronize the Errours or Obſtinacy, if any.

It's granted us by all, that nothing ſhould bee commanded us by man, which is contrary to the Word of God; that if it bee, and wee know it, wee are bound not to perform it, God being the abſolute univerſal Soveraign; That wee muſt uſe all juſt means to diſcern the will of God, and whether the commands of men be contrary to it; that if the command bee ſinfull, and any through the neglect of ſufficient ſearch, ſhall judge it lawful; his culpable errour excuſeth not his doing it, from being ſin; and therefore as a reaſonable creature muſt needs have a judgement of diſcerning, that he may

rationally obey it; so is hee with the greatest care and diligence to exercise it in the greatest things, even in the obeying of God, and saving of his Soul; and that where a strong probability of great sin and danger lyeth before us, wee must not rashly run on without search, and that to go on against Conscience, even where it is mistaken, is sin and danger to him that erreth. And on the other side, wee are remembred, that in things no way against the Laws of God; the Commands of our Governours must bee obeyed; but if they command what God forbids, wee must patiently submit to suffering, and every soul must bee subject to the higher Powers, for conscience sake, and not resist: The publick Judgement, civil, or ecclesiastical, belongeth only to publick persons, and not to any private man; that no man must bee causelessly, and pragmatically inquisitive into the Reasons of his Superiours commands; nor by pride and self-conceitedness, exalt his own understanding above it's worth and office, but all to bee modestly, and humbly self-suspitious; that none must erroniously pretend to Gods law, against the just command of his Superiours, nor pretend the doing of his duty to bee sin; that hee who suspecteth his Superiours commands to bee against Gods Laws, must use all means for full Information, before hee settle in a course of disobeying them; and that hee who indeed discovereth any thing commanded to bee sin, though hee must not do it, must manage his opinion with very great tenderness and care, of the publick Peace, and the honours of his Governours, these are our Principles: If wee are otherwise represented to your Majesty, wee are mis-represented; If wee are accused of contradicting them, wee humbly crave that wee may not bee condemned, till wee bee heard.

It is the desire of our Souls to contribute our parts and interests to the utmost, for the promoting of holiness, charity, unity, and obedience to Rulers in all lawful things: But if wee should sin against God, because wee are commanded, who shall answer for us, or save us from his Justice? And wee humbly crave, that it may bee no just *Gravamen* of our dissent, that thereby wee suppose Superiours may erre, seeing it is but supposing them to bee men not yet in Heaven; and this

this may bee reputed to every one that differeth in opinion from another. And wee beseech your Majesty to beleeve, that as wee seek no greater matters in the World than daily Bread, with liberty to Preach the Gospel, and Worship God according to his Word, and the practise of the Primitive Churches; so wee hope it is not through Pusillanimity, and over much tendernesse of suffering, that wee have pleaded so much for the avoiding of suffering, to our selves or others. May none of our sufferings hinder the prosperity of the Church, and the good of Souls, and wee have enough. And wee suppose those that think the persons inconsiderable in Number and Quality for whom wee plead, will not themselves beleeve that wee have done this for popular applause: this were not so much to seek the reward of Hypocrites, as to play the game of Fools; seeing the applause of inconsiderable men can bee but inconsiderable, and wee know our selves that we are like thus to offend those that are not inconsiderable; the Lord that searcheth hearts, doth know that it is not so much the avoiding of suffering to our selves, or any particular person, that is the end of our endeavours (though this were no Ambitious end) for the peace and welfare of the Church and Kingdome, under your Majesties Government. Wee know that supposing them who are for the Ceremonies, to bee as Pious and Charitable as the rest, it cannot so much offend them that another may forbear them, as it must offend another to be forced to use them; and wee know that conscientious men will not consent to the practising of things in their judgement unlawful, when those may yeild that count the matter indifferent. And for the management of this Treaty, it being agreed at our first meeting that nothing be reported as the words or sense of either part, but what is delivered by them in writing; Wee humbly crave that your Majesty receive no more as ours, and that what is charged on any particular person, hee may be answerable for himself; and though the Reverend Bishops have not had time to consider our Additions to the Liturgy, and of our Reply, that yet it may be considered before a Determination be made. And though we seem to have laboured in vain, we shall yet lay this work of Reconciliation and Peace at your

Majesties

Majesties feet, beseeching you to prosper such a blessed Resolution, till it attain success: We must needs beleeve that when your Majesty took our Consent to a Liturgy to be a foundation that would infer our Concord, you meant not that wee should have no Concord, but by consenting to this Liturgy, without any considerable Alterations.

And when you comforted us with your Resolutions to draw us together, by yeelding on both sides in what wee could, you meant not that wee should bee the boat to lay the banks that should not stir, and when your Majesty commanded us by Letters Patents to meet about such Alterations as are needful or expedient for giving satisfaction to tender Consciences, and the restoring and continuing of Peace and Unity, wee rest assured, that it was not your sense that those tender consciences were to be forced to practise all which they judged unlawful, and not so much as a Ceremony abated them, or that our Treaty was only to convert either party to the Opinion of another, and that all our hopes of Concord and Liberty consisted only in disputing the Bishops into Non-conformity, or coming in every Ceremony to their minds.

Finally, for your Majesty, under God, is the protection whereto your people flye, and as the same necessity still remains which drew forth your Gracious Declaration, wee most Humbly and Earnestly beseech your Majesty, that the benefit of the said Declaration may bee continued to the people, and in particular, that none be punished or troubled for not using the Common-Prayer, till it bee effectually reformed, and the Addition made, as there expresst. Wee crave your Majesties Pardon for the tediousness of this Address, and shall wait in hope, that so great a Calamity of your people as will follow the loss of so many able faithful Ministers, as the rigorous Imposition would cast out, shall never be recorded in the History of your Reign, but that these impediments of Concord being forborn, your Kingdome may flourish in Piety and Peace, that this may be the signal honour of your happy Reign, and your joy in the day of your account, which is the prayer of

Your Majesties Faithful and Obedient Subjects.

FINIS.